National Association of Counties 2006 Achievement Award Program
Nomination Summary
HHSA Facilities Management Database, San Diego County, California

1. Abstract of the Program

Buildings are part of any governmental agency's essential resources for serving the public. Regardless of an agency's size, inadequate information about its facilities can compromise efforts to save money, improve services, and ensure the safety of employees and the public. Having accurate, up-to-date, readily accessible facility information is more important today than ever, as part of ensuring the highest possible level of disaster preparedness.

To catalogue and maintain current information about the buildings it uses, San Diego County's Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) developed the Facilities Management Database. This computer-based tool, created by HHSA staff, allows instant access to facilities information about all HHSA buildings. The user-friendly database is available to all HHSA staff from any County-networked computer.

The database is a centrally managed, automated repository of comprehensive information critical to managing the nearly 100 county-owned and leased facilities occupied by HHSA staff and programs. HHSA's roughly 6,000 staff can easily access such diverse, site-specific information as: facility locations (with linked, on-line maps to each site), emergency contact data, programs operated in each facility, security guard coverage, vehicles housed on-site, facility-specific work orders and project listings, site asbestos identification, occupancy related budget information, detailed lease information, and building photos.

2. The Problem/ Need for the Program

HHSA delivers a broad range of health and human services from 100 different facilities spread throughout San Diego County's 4,235 square miles. Given the nature of health and human services, this is an extremely diverse group of facilities, including hospitals, health clinics, family resource centers and welfare-to-work offices. Programs provided from these facilities include services to seniors and disabled individuals; public assistance programs, child welfare and other social services; and public health, substance abuse and mental health services. These services are provided by a staff of approximately 5,550 employees.

HHSA's physical size and complexity led staff to frequently request a variety of data from Facilities Management staff, including occupancy square footage allocations, budgetary funding levels, lease related information (when a facility is not County-owned), maintenance level requirements, known health or safety hazards, site emergency information and contact data, business continuation plans, security considerations and other similar information. Before the creation of the Facilities Management Database, information was maintained by many different groups including HHSA Facilities Management, DGS Real Estate Services Division (in the case of leased space or

occupancy allocations), DGS Facilities Maintenance Division (in the case of work order, project, and maintenance items), the individual programs, the HHSA Budget Office and HHSA Fiscal Operations.

Over time, each group developed its own system for gathering, collating and updating information. Communication was often difficult among budget staff, program administrators, accountants, project managers, property agents and maintenance workers. Each group employed its own terminology and perspective in maintaining data files. For example, various groups would often refer to the same building by different names. For example, one building was called Trolley, Mills, James R. Mills and 1250 Imperial. Consequently, the various groups rarely shared information with others who needed it and it became increasingly difficult to access or interpret facilities related information. If staff obtained data from a non-primary source, accuracy was problematic.

When questions arose, Facilities Management staff spent considerable time gathering information from the various sources, comparing the data and then often having to backtrack to establish accuracy with the source. In the absence of a central data repository, the task was never-ending and it became obvious that this situation had to be improved. In order to establish a single, consistent source of information it was decided that a comprehensive database would be the best tool to organize all the parts.

This database is even used by HHSA Executive staff. During emergencies, such as firestorms, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, or other disasters, HHSA coordinates and dispatches nurses, physicians, mental health counselors, and ambulances, as well as Medi-Cal and food stamp eligibility workers. The HHSA Departmental Operations Center (DOC) is activated and staffed by HHSA executives who coordinate HHSA's response. At times such as these, site emergency contact information becomes critical. An example was Southern California's Firestorm of fall 2003.

Before the Facilities Management Database was created, the DOC's information on site contacts and off-duty phone numbers was kept in a dozen three ring binders and was organized by HHSA geographic service region. Finding contact information entailed a tedious search through these binders. Since the creation of the Facilities Management Database, it can now be used to quickly retrieve this crucial information.

3. Description of the Program

The Facilities Management Database is currently in use throughout the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency.

Objectives
The main objective of the Facilities Management Database is to centralize the collection of HHSA facility-related records and files in a single, user-friendly application. Having

fundamental data in one, easily accessible location saves significant time and provides efficient customer service for HHSA staff.

Description
This relational database is designed with the end-user in mind. Its simple user interface layout, similar to a web site, can be intuitively navigated with no prior knowledge of database software. Data and files, including those that were created with other software applications such as Microsoft *Word*, Microsoft *Excel*, and Microsoft *Power Point*, are accessed easily and quickly. Prior to creation of this database, manual compilation of data from numerous sources required days for what now takes minutes.

A user has three options for retrieving facility-specific information from the database: by facility address, facility name or County Property Number (CPN). When facility information is retrieved, the database presents a site-specific main screen, which allows moving to screens with the following data:

- Address, facility name, photos, and contacts for all HHSA facilities.
- On-line maps to each site. MapQuest maps and directions are quickly retrieved with the push of a button.
- Facility programs, program managers, budgetary account numbers. These pages list the programs at each site, as well as contact information for each program manager.
- Lease information and related files. These pages contain important information about County-leased buildings. Primary is a .pdf copy of the lease with extension, termination, and validation terms. Names and phone numbers of site contacts and building codes are also compiled in simple layout for easy access.
- Real Property data such as square footage, number of buildings, number of employees working at the site, and property managers.
- Capital Project information.
- Emergency information, such as site emergency coordinators' names and phone numbers, as well as the locations of emergency supplies, first aid kits and defibrillators.
- Security and guard information, such as number and types of guards, and hours of service.
- Links to Asbestos reports.
- Forms and procedures documents. Facilities Management has placed its forms and procedures (such as Property Disposal, Fixed Assets, Moving, Vehicle Fleet, Work Orders) on one page for easy access.
- Readily available information on vehicle locations and contacts.
- Construction drawings and plans created in AutoCAD software, or scanned and displayed in .pdf format.
- Work orders. The database automated a facilities work orders process by replacing various manual tasks with a time saving system. The database allows one to electronically track and monitor HHSA facilities work orders, to quickly respond to requestors' inquiries, providing prompt customer service.

Links to other sites and sections are continuously in development.

The data can be extracted using more than 40 pre-designed reports that are logically located throughout the database. Each section, or page, that displays data has a link to a report, which can be printed with a mouse click. Some of the reports are: Facilities Information, Emergency Information, Defibrillator locations, Delivery Point Codes, Facility Utilization, Security Guard information, Maintenance Categories, Programs and Contacts, and Work Orders Logs.

Time Frame
It took approximately nine months to build the relational structure of the database, design its interface, and populate it with data. It was launched in September 2004. It is a continuous process to maintain the database and to keep the information current. Surveys are regularly sent to sites and programs to solicit the most current and accurate information.

Clientele Being Served
The Facilities Management database is conveniently located on the HHSA shared network drive and can be accessed by anyone in HHSA. It is a valuable tool for Facilities Management, contract managers, information technology personnel, budget staff, program managers and emergency response teams.

Recently, the Department of General Services reviewed a copy of the database and updated its own information systems to reflect the more accurate and current information housed within the HHSA Facilities Management Database. In the future, HHSA hopes to be able to offer a link to General Services and share data real time to further enhance this cooperative venture.

The County's Role
The Facilities Management Database was envisioned and created entirely in-house. This approach, rather than one utilizing consultant services, holds staff responsible for researching and understanding client needs and priorities. The HHSA Executive Team supported the creation and implementation of the project that was then developed by HHSA staff. Facilities Management staff constantly updates the database and incorporates additional functionality.

4. Use of Technology

Primary applications and systems used are as follows:
a. Microsoft *Access* – used as a primary software to create a custom Facilities Management application.
b. LAN – used to store and share the database and associated files.

c. Internet - used to link on-line maps to each site.
d. Internet browser – its interface is familiar to all, and HHSA utilized this knowledge to build the database's interface so that it could be used by anyone without requiring that they have database experience.
e. Scanner – used to scan documents and store them in the database.
f. Read/Write CD's and CD Burner – used to make backups and distribute copies.
g. Microsoft *Word* – used to create documents that can be linked within the database.
h. Microsoft *Excel* – used to import and export tables and data.
i. Microsoft *Power Pont* – used to create presentations that can be linked within the database.
j. *AutoCAD* – used to create facilities floor plans and construction documents.

5. The Cost of the Program

The Facilities Management Database was created with Microsoft *Access*. This program is one of the standard applications on all County of San Diego desktop computers. Therefore, there was no additional software cost involved.

The primary cost of this project was "programming" time to create the database. Fortunately, HHSA Facilities Management has a staff member who was familiar with *Access* and who understood most of the advanced features available within the program. In addition to development time, time is required for programs to update information surveys provided by Facilities Management. Since Facilities Management already possessed the in-house expertise to design this database, it was not necessary to incur the cost of consultant time to develop the program.

For a development cost estimate, a county attempting to replicate this program could expect to pay for 500 hours of computer programmer or administrative analyst time to develop and populate a database. In San Diego County, an Administrative Analyst I cost is $23.13 per hour, which equals $11,565 for 500 hours.

6. The Results/Success of the Program

The objective of this program was to provide a centralized, automated repository of facility-related information. Using this database, HHSA staff have access to diverse, site-specific information. The success of this program can be measured by the diminished frequency with which Health and Human Services Agency staff must contact HHSA Facilities Management to search for answers, since information is now available quickly and easily to all HHSA employees. Prior to the deployment of the Facilities Management Database, Facilities Management received five to ten requests each week for facility related data. Answering these questions usually required research by Facilities Management staff.

Since deployment of the database, the number of inquiries has declined to an average of one a week. Usually, the questions can be answered by referring the requestor to the database. Even those inquiries that are not answered by the information in the database are useful since they alert Facilities Management to a new area of content for the database. The database saves an estimated 520 hours of Facilities Management staff time each year that can be used for other, more productive tasks.

Another measure of success is the ease with which users become adept at navigating the database. Since deployment, hundreds of HHSA staff have used the database to find information. The product has been universally praised for its ease of use, navigability, and the accuracy of its data. HHSA staff have participated in data gathering and cleansing efforts.

By using an instantly recognizable design model (an Internet Web page), the database's interface is familiar to all. This model was used to build the interface so that it could be used by anyone without requiring that they have database experience.

Upon deployment, HHSA staff were invited to inspect the new database, give it a test drive and offer comments. Appreciative employees responded with numerous phone calls. Staff also provided input about other potential uses for the database. One example is a field that lists the "Pennant Alliance Site Number" which is used by information technology staff to identify the physical location of network hubs and data servers. This information had been available only in spreadsheet format. Within days of deployment, two staff from the HHSA Information Technology Division had called to comment on the time they saved just by using this field. When trouble calls come in, one of the first questions is, "What site is this affecting?" Usually staff do not know their site number. Now, trouble desk staff merely open the record for the address from which the employee is calling and see the site number listed.

7. Worthiness of an Award

The Facilities Management Database is a simple, cost-effective, time-saving use of technology that could be adapted or replicated by any public agency, regardless of size or number and type of facilities.
The database has dramatically increased the speed with which facility-related information can be retrieved. It is also an extremely flexible tool, which, with just a mouse click or two, produces reports, retrieves maps, displays site-photos, presents a .pdf of the current site lease, provides site emergency contact information, and meets other facility-related needs for staff throughout San Diego County's Health and Human Services Agency. Existing staff created the finished product quickly and inexpensively. The design is such that its usefulness will grow as the database itself grows.

The decision to make this tool available to anyone seeking the data has greatly enhanced communication between facilities, maintenance, budget, and fiscal staff. The open communication channels have created opportunities for data sharing and provided insights into the variety of data that should be included.

From a management standpoint, the Facilities Management Database is highly innovative and proactive. Speeding data retrieval provides efficiencies that promote greater client services at the lowest effective cost.

The database is a prime example of frontline County staff recognizing a problem, then envisioning and successfully developing a solution, without the need for any outside expertise.